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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Thursday, June 29, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WHAT FARM WOMEN WANT IN THEIR HOMES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today I'm reporting to you a few of the highlights of a study made recently by the Bureau of Home Economics--of farmhouses the country over. The purpose of this study was to find out--from farm homemakers themselves-- what accommodations should be built into farm houses.

Of course, from the first, those in charge of the survey realized that no two families would want and need exactly the same things in a house design. And they also knew that housing needs would be different in different sections of the country.

With all this in mind--they took the opinions and facts as they found them--organized them--and interpreted them. And from their conclusions they have made some general suggestions--as to desirable features of farmhouses all over the United States.

They do not present these suggestions as the final word. But they hope they will be useful--as suggestions. They would like for them to serve as a beginning--to which others interested in farm housing will contribute.

First--about the number of rooms in a house.

Apparently farm women are not so concerned over the number of rooms as they are with their size and shape and plan. Many farmhouses have as few as four rooms. But if there are children in the family, it's desirable to have at least six rooms. That way there can be a separate kitchen--dining room--and living room--and 3 bedrooms--one for the parents, one for the girls, and one for the boys.

In houses that have only four rooms--there are several possible ways to "double-up"--using one room for more than one purpose. A plan that is appropriate for all sections of the country but the Southeast is to have the kitchen and dining room combined--a living room that may be used as a bedroom--and two other bedrooms.

In the Southeast--farm homemakers would rather combine the living room with the dining room--and have a separate kitchen.

West of the Rockies--in five-room houses--homemakers seem to favor the plan of combining the living room and the dining room--having a separate kitchen--and three bedrooms. East of the Rocky Mountains the general preference seemed to be for living room--dining room--and kitchen to all be separate--leaving only 2 bedrooms.

And now a word or two about kitchens--from this report on housing requirements of farm families.

Since a farm woman spends a good bit of time in the kitchen, she likes it to be arranged compactly and conveniently. She wants a pleasant outlook from the kitchen windows. She'd like to have a view--or at least a glimpse of both the highway and the farmyard.

In the warmer part of the United States, kitchen doors and windows should be arranged to make the most of the summer breezes. In the colder part of the country, the homemaker is more concerned over the protection of the doors and windows from cold. Since the back entrance is used more than any other in the house, it should be well-protected from winter storms.

Most farm women would like to have the back entry to the house built so that it will not open directly into the kitchen. They would like to have the back door open into a utility room or a "washing-up" place. Then, men coming in from the fields and the barns can leave their chore clothes in the wash room and clean up before meals. Needless to say, this does away with much tracking up of the kitchen floor.

If there are young children in the family, the mother likes to be able to keep an eye on them as she works about the kitchen. It is convenient to have a play space close to the kitchen--that can be heated in the wintertime.

And here are a few general suggestions--for all the rooms of the house.

In all rooms--doors and windows should be placed so that they provide a natural circulation of air. In parts of the country where humidity is high in the summer--doors and removable wall panels may furnish part of the ventilation. Window sills should be low. And there may be transoms over the door--and ceiling fans if electricity is available. To protect windows and doors from heat and glare there may be wide eaves--porches--shutters-- awnings--venetian shades or blinds.

In cold climates--tight construction of doors and windows will help to keep the cost of fuel to a minimum. There may be storm windows in some parts of the country--and weather stripping. In the northern part of the United States, there needs to be a central heating system in houses that have running water to keep the plumbing from freezing.

One housing feature that is popular all over the country is a fireplace in the living room. Another feature--popular in all but the warmest sections of the country--is the coal or wood range in the kitchen. In summertime, most homemakers supplement this with a kerosene stove or some other type of stove that heats up and cools down quickly.

And now just a final note about the house plan in general. Most farm homes are started when the family is small. The rooms are built on as the family grows. It's a good idea to plan the original small house with an eye to these later additions. Then the arrangement will be more satisfactory when the rooms are added--and the house will look better from the outside.

Often it's a good idea to plan the house so that some rooms may be closed off. Then if the size of the family is reduced, unnecessary rooms may be shut off to save housework and fuel.

And that finishes all the general suggestions on farm houses that I have time for in today's broadcast.

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